

INAUGURAL ADDRESS  
OF  
HON. ROBERT S. RANTOUL,  
MAYOR  
OF THE  
CITY OF SALEM,  
TO THE  
CITY COUNCIL,  
JANUARY, 1893.



SALEM:  
THE SALEM OBSERVER BOOK AND JOB PRINT.  
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## MAYOR'S ADDRESS.

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### *Members of the City Council:*

We assume the administration of city affairs to-day under fortunate conditions. Our funded debt — never approaching, even remotely, the debt limit fixed by law — is less than it was last year, and is seventy-six thousand dollars less now than in 1890. Of this funded debt, obligations to the amount of \$176,000 will mature and be cancelled before September next, so that the present burden of indebtedness to be considered in estimating what we shall be able to do for the city during the year of our stewardship, does not vary much from \$943,000.

Of this total, unexpended balances of the Canal Street and Water Main loans of 1891, and of the School-house, Webb Street sewer and South River loans of 1892, appropriated but not withdrawn, and now on interest in the banks, amount to the considerable sum of \$68,000, a sum nearly or quite enough to meet the cost of those much commended operations.

This substantial sum, lying in the banks, of course swells the usual cash balance passed over as a nest-egg by one administration to the next, to exceptional proportions.

Last year, augmented by some items from the Canal Street and new Water Main loans, it amounted to \$41,656. This year we enter upon our work with a balance on hand of \$78,718.

#### THE NET EXPENDITURES OF 1892,

notwithstanding somewhat exceptional activity in the street and public property departments, the unusual calls upon the poor department and the sleepless energy of the Board of Health, were less than the net expenditures of 1891, by the sum of \$23,000, or nearly one dollar on every thousand of our taxable valuation. But once in ten years have taxes been lower than last year. And while this gratifying result has been in no degree achieved by any ill-advised effort to strain up the assessed valuation of property, and while the depression in our leading industry has compelled a reduction on real estate in some instances, and personal property has slipped away from us in others, it has been possible, in perfectly legitimate ways, to advance the net assessed valuation of the city by nearly a quarter of a million of dollars. Fifty thousand dollars less were raised in city taxes in 1892 than in 1891. The reputation we strive for is that of a city which keeps its taxation at a figure both moderate and steady.

Whilst our financial showing is thus in every way encouraging and satisfactory, no faithful official will permit himself to be betrayed into recklessness or lack of vigilance by the contemplation of it. The expenditures proper for a single year are mainly limited to such as cannot wait, and to such



as, if postponed, will cost more in the future. The amount of money, which can be raised, either by taxation or loan, and used in any year, is not an elastic one, but is determined for us, not so much by debt limits and tax limits fixed by law, because it is our policy not to press upon either of these limits, but by the extent to which real estate can sustain the burthen without depreciation and personal estate will bear it without being driven away. From the large number of desirable things we would like to see accomplished, it is necessary to

SELECT CAREFULLY A CERTAIN PART

which can be effected without inordinate expense, and to address ourselves vigorously and at once to the achievement of them. In this point of view it would be well, if, for the early months of the year, the two boards would meet more frequently than they do, say every week or ten days, so that the year's work shall be in progress before the summer intermission, rather than left, as was the case last year, to be set on foot in the closing months of the season.

It is my conviction that the business of the city would be better and more promptly done if the Common Council consisted of two or perhaps three members from each ward. But I do not favor reducing the City Council to a single chamber. The suggestion is not out of place here that the report of the clerk, the only evidence of what is done at our sessions, is neither read nor accepted of late, and is too voluminous to be attested in that way. I think it would be well if each branch had a small standing committee, some

member of which, before each meeting, shall attest in writing the report of the last preceding meeting of the Board it represents.

#### OF THE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STREETS

undertaken last year, several are satisfactorily completed, and need no comment. The new street over South river, together with the re-adjustment of the easterly line of Lafayette street at this point, are provided for in contracts and are progressing well. Every effort will be made to re-open Lafayette street to travel as soon as may be. The work on this grand avenue, near the Marblehead line, is in charge of the Street Department, and will be finished in the spring at a cost and in a manner which will both commend themselves to the taxpayers of Salem.

Bridge street, near Essex bridge, has been widened at small cost, and will soon be in a condition to justify the step. The changes proposed on new Bridge street from the Court Houses to the North Bridge, are equally important, and steps looking to the execution of the work, already voted will be entered upon without delay.

Present conditions affecting our great leather industry make this a favorable opportunity for acquiring additional width on a narrow section of Boston street, between Federal and Goodhue streets, and in view of the inevitable demand for more street railway tracks between Salem and Peabody, I respectfully invite the attention of the honorable City Council to the feasibility of widening the street ten or twelve feet at this point, and of rounding the corner of Bos-

ton and Federal streets between the Robertson and Stimpson estates.

Ash street is in a condition which probably renders the city liable to penalties for maintaining a defective way, as well as to damages for personal injury. It should either be made safe or closed to public travel.

The proposed

#### WIDENING OF LORING AVENUE,

from Lafayette street to the Swampscott line, which the generous offers of abutting owners make expedient at this time, a portion of the present width having been surrendered to a street railway track, should be adjusted and completed without delay. And probably no time will prove more auspicious than the present for rounding the corner of Norman and Washington streets, from a point opposite Mill street to the estate of the late Joseph E. Fisk.

The filling of the Mill pond, now well advanced, calls attention to the want of proper access to that large tract of made land about to be utilized for productive industries. The corner formed by Mill and Endicott streets seems to offer the first point of attack, and whenever the state of the exchequer will permit it, that troublesome corner should be rectified and the block-paving already begun in that section should be extended, in the interest of a large amount of heavy freight teaming which passes there.

The crest of Broadway, which formed the highest point in the line of travel now in use between new Washington street at its junction with Mill street and Loring avenue, is



undergoing a reduction of five feet, which will relieve the heavy transportation thrown upon that line by the closing of South bridge. The favorable terms upon which this high grade is being reduced, owing to a demand for gravel within hauling distance, form, as in the case of the stone used at the widening near Forest River mills, no small factor in the success of the undertaking, and it is hoped that, with the opening of spring, when Lafayette street will be again passable at the South river, the new route by Canal street, between Salem and Lynn, will be so much more available for night traffic to Boston, and other heavy teaming, as to relieve Lafayette street of the greater part of it. The distance is practically the same. The grade of Lafayette street, between Dodge and Harbor streets, has a rise of fifteen feet in a length of about two hundred feet,—a severe grade for heavy work. The worst grade on the line of

#### CANAL STREET AND BROADWAY

is a rise of eleven feet in a distance of about three hundred and fifty feet, between Ocean avenue and the crest of Broadway. When reduced five feet, this rise will amount to but six feet, and after Ocean avenue is graded up to meet the new bridge over the railroad tracks at Castle hill, the rise will be so distributed as to amount to nothing.

This bridge, originally provided for in the plans of Ocean avenue, cannot be long delayed. The cost will be divided between the railroad corporation and the city. The present structure has ceased to be reliable for fire engines, and no heavy team can safely cross it.

Our streets generally are so good as to win praise from strangers. And I commend the activity, economy and good judgment shown in the work of the Street Department and its able Street Commissioner.

## SEWERS.

By an act passed last year, the city is now empowered to construct public sewers to be used by abutters at an annual rental, forming a lien on the estate entering such sewer and collectable like water rates or taxes. The city may further construct particular sewers for the use of each estate, and large and liberal provisions are made in the act, for encouraging the construction of sewers, both public and particular, at the cost of the city, at once securing the treasury against loss and the public health against invasion. I commend Chapter 245 of the Acts of 1892 to your careful examination.

The suggestion thrown out last year, favoring joint action between Salem and her neighbor towns to secure a comprehensive system of sewerage for all, has met with some response, but no definite result has been arrived at. The Commonwealth, having large interests at Danvers, should be asked to join us.

## THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The Hook and Ladder truck, asked for last year, has arrived, and proves a valuable protection. The greater height to which modern buildings reach makes provision of this sort every year more indispensable. A chemical engine would probably prove an expedient purchase, but beyond

that I am not aware that the department feels any pressing needs at present.

Until a week ago, the ordinance governing appointments in this department was in a condition which deprived the Mayor and Aldermen of all responsibility and power in the matter. They could not make an appointment to the Fire Department which was not first dictated to them by the Board of Engineers. Whether this was a wise or an unwise ordinance, it was an illegal ordinance. It is now repealed, and a new ordinance, approved December 23, restores the appointing power to the Mayor and Aldermen. It is my purpose, at an early day, to acquaint myself with the condition of the department and make such nominations as seem to be called for.

I ask the favorable consideration of the City Council for a proposal about to be submitted, which will enable the city to avail itself, on easy terms, of a tug-boat furnished with powerful fire apparatus, now doing duty in our harbor — a valuable adjunct, as I believe, to our Fire Department.

#### THE SCHOOLS.

The condition of the schools, is, I believe, generally satisfactory. Several of them, notably the boys' evening school, need to be re-housed, and better accommodations will be provided as fast as pecuniary and other circumstances may seem to warrant. The Superintendent, by careful and intelligent attention to his work, has already established himself and his office in public favor. I commend his thorough and suggestive report to parents and



other true friends of education. It is a valuable treatise, and in its efforts to broaden the methods in teaching, — to substitute inspiration for drill, to get rid of machine work, and to make the system of promotions more elastic and practical, and to minimize grading, — has my hearty concurrence.

It is satisfactory to know that the discipline at the High School is improving, and it is much to be desired that the High School battalion, discontinued under circumstances which reflected discreditably upon the tone and discipline of the school, shall be revived as soon as a sufficient number of boys are ready, with the consent of their parents, to join such an organization. No school teaches better lessons in order, authority, precision, punctuality, concentration of the faculties, respect for superiors, devotion to duty, and above all, love of country, than the school of the soldier, and, when duty calls, a little knowledge of drill and tactics makes all the difference between serving as an officer and serving as a private.

#### THE POOR.

I commend the able report of the Secretary of the Poor Board, a record of successful administration, to which his own devoted service has contributed much. The limits of this address do not permit me to discuss its interesting statements. Under all the discouragements of the year, the Poor Department has accomplished its work with a better financial showing than that of the year before.

#### STREET LIGHTING.

The work of properly and equally lighting the several

streets of the city, undertaken in 1891, is now complete, with the exception of a single mile, and a system of arc and incandescent lights established, more satisfactory than any system which has ever preceded it, and more economical for the service secured. The cost of the department for 1892, was less by some hundreds of dollars than in 1891. Notwithstanding the fact that our side streets are now lighted every night, instead of two-thirds of the time, as before, the net cost of the department is less than for either of the five preceding years.

#### THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Quickened by the apprehension of a possible visitation of the Asiatic cholera, next summer, the Health Department has labored assiduously, and with effect, to rid the city of every element which can give a foothold to the dreaded scourge. Little remains to be done, and, with reasonable support from all sections of the city, our preparations will be equal to the best.

Cremation seems to be the approved means of disposing of garbage to-day, and I respectfully ask you to consider the expediency of establishing, near the Almhouse wharf on the neck, a cremating furnace, the cost of which would not be great, fuel for which could be landed there with ease, and the product of which could be sold in our own markets at a remunerative rate.

The Mill pond nuisance, which has been a serious injury to Salem for some years past, has been almost wholly abated, and for this the Board of Health deserves the gratitude of the people.

## WENHAM LAKE.

No little uneasiness has been created by the unusual condition of Wenham lake. Having taken such precautions as insured the city against an immediate scarcity of water, we next applied ourselves to discovering the cause and the remedy. I suppose the suggestion that serious leaks might exist, has ceased to influence many persons. The idea that Manchester is drawing on our supply, or that any radical change has taken place in the geological conditions and surroundings of the lake, seems to be also improbable. The probable explanation seems to be that we are using water more freely than the capacity of the source of supply will warrant. I do not understand that any scientific expert ever represented the lake as reliable for more than three millions of gallons per day: — we are drawing about four millions daily. A generation has grown up in Salem who have allowed themselves to suppose that the supply is practically without limit. To this impression the examinations and reports give no color whatever. The first report of the committee of citizens, rendered to the City Council, May 23, 1864, and signed by such careful and intelligent persons as Stephen H. Phillips, James B. Curwen and James Upton, estimated the daily supply to be derived from Wenham pond at three million gallons. Their conservative estimate of the population to be supplied was quite inadequate. Taking the population of Salem at 25,000, and adding for Beverly 5000, they assumed a total in 1865 of 30,000 persons. They expected an increase of 10,000 in fifty years, which would bring the population to be provided with Wen-



ham water up to 40,000 in the year 1915. They estimated the water needed at 50 gallons per head, making for this prospective population of 40,000 in 1915, a demand equal to two million gallons per day. They say that the pond is fed through springs by subterranean courses, and is equal to a demand of three million gallons daily. While placing the outside limit of the pond's capacity at three millions, they recommend the building of works able to furnish a daily supply of two millions, which the City Council of that day considered ample for all purposes then to be anticipated.

Ten years had not elapsed before these

ESTIMATES WERE OUTGROWN,

and the Water Board were pumping, on an average, nearly three millions of gallons daily, and were calling lustily for new sources of supply, new mains, and a new pumping engine. The two populations supplied on either side of Essex bridge, instead of reaching 40,000 in 1915, reached that figure five years ago. The consumption of water, growing steadily from month to month, at a rate of increase augmented by the fact that the amount used was only in part paid for by water takers, had reached, on some days in 1873, over four million gallons, and the efforts of the Water Board to check this growth were unavailing. The largest quantity of water ever taken from the lake in a single month was pumped in August last. The amount was 119,920,280 gallons, or a daily quota of 3,868,396 gallons.

It seems to me that the causes of our embarrassment are not far to seek. A lake whose water-shed furnishes but three

million gallons, cannot long sustain the draught of four millions, in a dry season. Sir Charles Lyell in 1846, and other eminent men of science before and since, thought the lake was fed by springs — but the springs themselves must be fed. The first step to take would seem to be to ascertain, upon authority which will satisfy the public, how much water can be depended on from Wenham lake, and next, whether consumption can be limited to that amount. The use of meters limits the consumption to twenty-five or thirty gallons per head daily, but meters are expensive. We are using, or rather wasting, three times that quantity of water. Meters will cost us a quarter of a million of dollars. To keep the supply up to the present exorbitant demands will cost us thrice that amount. If the people of Salem must have the amount of water they are now getting, they must be prepared at once for another enormous expenditure of money on their water works, which might with reasonable economy of water be avoided. My suggestion is that besides employing an expert of the highest authority in the matter of water-shed and water-sources, we should institute a house to house examination, or apply portable street meters, and satisfy ourselves how the water, which comes into Salem, is disposed of, with a view of checking any abuses which may be discovered.

In quality the water is entirely satisfactory, and the present low condition of the lake has been availed of to the utmost to insure the purity of our drinking supply, with a view to the terrible contingency of an epidemic in the coming season.

It is much to be desired that another year may not elapse without the laying of an iron main in Canal street. The street can then be put in proper order for the heavy travel now passing over it, and a large section of Ward Five will, by the taking up of dead ends in several populous streets, be afforded greater security from fire and a better supply of water for all purposes. A break in the present supply pipe near Porter street would lead to serious complications.

#### THE PARK ACT.

I congratulate the people of Salem upon the acceptance of the Park Act. Under its provisions, before the first Monday in May next, the Mayor will nominate for the confirmation or rejection of the City Council, a Board of Park Commissioners, who will be able, under the carefully limited powers conferred, to take possession of and lay out and improve for park purposes, any grounds which the health, beauty and convenience of the city may seem to require, but only after appropriation, and within the limit of such appropriation, first passed by a two-thirds vote of the City Council. Had such a commission been in existence twenty-five years ago, a public park would now occupy the tract lying east of Broadway, between Loring avenue and Ocean avenue. And the first care of such a commission to-day will be to learn at what rate the Pavilion property may be acquired and added to the Willows park, and if not purchasable at a fair rate, whether the public interests do not require that it be condemned under the powers of the act for park purposes. There may be other tracts which should, before it is too



late, be acquired by the city — at Cold Springs, at Gallows Hill and near the head of Broad street.

## GIFTS FROM LOYAL SONS.

Salem has come to expect from her loyal sons, at all times, a generous remembrance, and in the year just closed she has not been disappointed. Two admirable pictures have been added, without cost to the city, to the valuable collection now decorating our walls, — interesting for their artistic merit, — interesting for the historic dignity of the subjects portrayed, — especially interesting to us because Salem had peculiar claims on both the distinguished magistrates commemorated. No two personages have left a more enduring stamp on the history of New England. The first and last of our colonial governors, and both our fellow-townsmen, one of them finding his last resting place among us — the only governors of Massachusetts who ever lived in Salem, they ought surely to find in these halls a recognition and a lasting home, and here they will look down, in approval we trust, upon our work forever.

Mr. Low has not forgotten his birthplace, and our public spirited townsman, Mr. Dickson, has found a grateful solace in bereavement, in pondering and maturing plans for a memorial chapel about to be erected, with the coming spring, in Greenlawn cemetery. A nameless donor has presented one hundred dollars to the reference library.

## A NEW POLICE STATION.

The opportune moment seems to have arrived for furnish-

ing our Police Force and the first District Court at the same time with fit accommodations. It is of the utmost consequence, for reasons obvious enough and too numerous to be detailed here, that the Court in which our ordinary offenders are tried and the cells in which they are detained for trial, be under one and the same roof. Economy, the uniform experience of police administration, the dictates of humanity and the behests of good morals and good taste, all concur in this demand. The District Court cannot remain where it now is. The Police Station has long been inconvenient, and has now ceased to be either fit or adequate for its purposes. The opening of a street over the South river gives to the rear of the Derby lot, upon which the city is under obligations to maintain a fish market, a valuable and well-located frontage of something more than fifty feet on the new street, with a depth ample for all the demands of a thoroughly equipped Police Station, with stable for ambulance and patrol wagon, cell room for tramps and criminals, offices for the business of the department, accommodations for patrolmen when awaiting calls for duty, and besides all this a thoroughly appointed and convenient court room. The construction of the street over the river is now far advanced, and should this spot be found a convenient one for a new station, I respectfully recommend that the undertaking be entered upon without needless delay.

#### THE NEW SIGNAL SYSTEM.

The new Police and Fire Alarm Signal System is nearly ready to be turned over to the city for the thirty days' test

provided for in the contract. So far as we can judge of its merits in its present unfinished state, the city has made a fortunate purchase. We confidently expect of it the highest success, and hope through its means to add one more to the list of rare scientific achievements associated with Salem.

#### THE LIQUOR QUESTION.

It has been my conviction, expressed in each of my annual addresses, that the issuing of licenses for the sale of intoxicants was on the whole the best policy for the city of Salem. I think so now. But I am not more persuaded of this than I am of the justice and expediency of referring the question to a vote of the people every year, under the system known as local option. The people of Salem, who have in my judgment the right to determine this question for themselves, have done so, and any expression of my views, which have at no time been disguised, would be uncalled for here. After the expiration of April next, the sale of intoxicants for general purposes becomes illegal. The legal restrictions with which it is attempted to suppress this traffic will be disregarded, and such means as the people of Salem see fit to put at my command, to enforce these restrictions, will be applied with vigor. If these means prove sufficient, the city will be rid of intoxication in the streets. If not, I shall ask for more power. The four months which will elapse before May 1 are ample in which to formulate a policy, and if difficulties are to be encountered, they must be met as they arise.

The condition of Salem in this regard is rather exceptionally creditable. Persons whose business requires them to travel about the country at large, are in the habit of saying



this, and of contrasting us very favorably with cities elsewhere, especially in the prohibitory State of Maine.

After the adverse verdict passed upon the system now in operation, steps were at once taken to ascertain, so far as could be done, the

#### TRUE CONDITION OF THE LIQUOR TRADE

in Salem. There are thirty licensed places of business of this kind to-day. The experience of the city ten years ago leads me to suppose that there are not far from one hundred and fifty places where drink will be sold, if it can be sold with profit, this year. The efforts of the executive department of the city have been concentrated on an attempt to limit sales of liquors to the thirty licensed dealers, and to hold them up to the conditions of their licenses. Out of a force of thirty patrolmen, who will compare favorably with any like force in this part of the country, reports have been received from twenty-three, showing that they believe their respective beats to be exempt from illegal dram-selling at this time, and that they had nothing which could be used in Court as evidence of illegal dram-selling in the city. These officers are experienced men, and familiar with the habits of our people, and many of them men whose judgment, integrity and public spirit would recommend them anywhere. The remaining seven officers have reported suspicions of five places in Salem where they suppose illegal traffic to be carried on, but where, although perfectly reliable and faithful officers, they have been unable to secure evidence enough to convict. Four of these places have been under suspicion for some time, one of which has now been broken up.

I conclude that the purpose of confining the traffic in Salem to licensed places, kept by responsible persons under bonds — subject to constant inspection — centrally located and open at all times to the view of the public, has been fairly well carried out, and that an effort to accomplish equally good results without the aid of license, will in all probability call for a considerable addition to the Police Force and for additional taxation.

## CONCLUSION.

*Members of the City Council:* — New burthens impose new duties. It is not given to us to see far into the future, but if the year before us is to be like those gone by, it will bring with it new and difficult questions of policy and administration. Whatever our embarrassments, — whatever our uncertainty, — there is a lode-star which cannot lead astray. While our eyes are fixed on that, the future is secure. That lode-star is an honest concern for the interests of all the people. Keeping that in view always, we shall honor ourselves and deserve well of our neighbors. For one year more, at least, it will be well with this ancient community. It is an ambition worthy of the best of us, to do some lasting service for the city of Salem.









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